

# An Empirical Study on the Role of Materialism in Determining the Level of Life Satisfaction Amongst the Young Adults of Indore City

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## Abstract

The present study examines the role of materialism in shaping life satisfaction among young adults residing in Indore city. In contemporary urban settings, increasing exposure to consumer culture and digital media has intensified material aspirations, particularly among young populations. Against this background, the study aimed to assess the levels of materialism and life satisfaction, and to explore the relationship between these two psychological constructs. A sample of 60 young adults was selected using a convenient sampling method. Data were collected using standardized instruments, namely the Material Values Scale (MVS) and the Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS). Descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation, and simple linear regression analysis were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that participants exhibited moderate levels of both materialism and life satisfaction. Although a weak positive correlation was observed between materialism and life satisfaction, the relationship was not statistically significant. Further, materialism did not emerge as a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The results suggest that material values alone do not play a decisive role in determining life satisfaction among young adults. Instead, life satisfaction appears to be influenced by a combination of psychological, social, and contextual factors. The study contributes empirical evidence to the understanding of materialism and subjective well-being within an urban Indian context and highlights the importance of non-material dimensions of well-being among young adults.

**Keywords:** Materialism, Life Satisfaction, Young Adults.

## Introduction:

Materialism, in general, refers to 'A person's perception about the importance of materialistic pursuits in his life'. It is an indicator of how much importance or value an individual pays to have materialistic possessions as well as to earn a prestigious status in society, and to feel respected and successful by his counterparts. Cambridge Dictionary suggests that materialism is 'the belief that having money and possessions is the most important thing in life'. (N.D.). Belk considered materialism as one of the important traits of individuals in modern society. He further developed a scale for measuring materialism in individuals where he considered three aspects of materialism namely possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy. (R. W. Belk, 1985) Materialism is also defined as a value that covers acquisition centrality, acquisition as a pursuit of happiness and possession defined success (Richins, 1992). Acquisition centrality is a tendency where a person emphasizes acquiring more and more, considering it as one of the major life

goals. This makes people continuously strive for material objects, including goods and services. Acquisition as a pursuit of happiness is again a tendency that makes a person feel happy and satisfied once he acquires any object or service. Possession defined success simply indicates a tendency to feel 'successful' only when one has possessed material objects as per worldly measures. In the last few decades, materialism has been constantly rising. Thanks to the marketers and advertisers, the mentality of acquiring and consuming has grown manyfold. The present generation of youngsters (The Zen Z) are even more exposed to the material world. They are the heavy users of digital media and social media platforms. These platforms use data analytics to determine the content that users prefer and show the related content continuously. The AI and Data analytics has given the strength to the marketers that they can manipulate the choices and decision-making of the users. The youngsters are even more at risk of being swayed by materialism. The paper aims to gain insight into how materialistic our youngsters are. One of the areas where materialism has a direct impact is life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is an overall evaluation of an individual about the quality of life. It is a cognitive construct that is related to attitude and perceptions of an individual about his life. This evaluation is individualistic in nature as every individual has his/her own criteria to evaluate life. (Diener et al., 1985). It can also be defined as the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of their life positively. (Veenhoven, R., 1991) Life satisfaction is related to the feeling of contentment one has and how one can accept the present status with grace. The paper aims to find out the level of life satisfaction in young adults and to establish a correlation with materialism, if any.

### **Literature Review:**

Many studies have been conducted so far to establish the link between materialism and life satisfaction. In an Indian study, the researchers found that materialism and life satisfaction have a significant correlation. (Bansal & Kumar, 2023). In some research, materialism is found to have no correlation with life satisfaction. In one such study, researchers found the same. There was a slightly negative correlation between happiness and materialism, but overall, life satisfaction was not found to have any link with materialism. (Patel & Shetty, 2020) A study in Malaysia suggests an indirect negative relationship between materialism and life satisfaction. The study concludes that materialism leads to higher stress levels which reduces life satisfaction. Religiousness is found to have a mediating role in reducing stress and materialism and hence increasing life satisfaction. (Baker et al., 2013). Another similar study in Malaysia studies the role of religion with reference to materialism and life satisfaction. It found that religious teachings reduce levels of materialism and due to this, life satisfaction increases. Religion interplays with materialism and life satisfaction. (Rakrachakarn et al., 2015). Another study was conducted on 246 participants of the marketing department of a private university in Southwestern United States, to find out the role of gratitude and need satisfaction in defining the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction. The study found that gratitude is a direct mediator whereas satisfaction needed was an indirect mediator. The research suggests that due to lower gratitude, the materialists experience lower life satisfaction. Lower gratitude (Tsang et al., 2014) A meta-analysis on materialism and life satisfaction reveals that in majority of research, materialism and life satisfaction are negatively correlated. However, this correlation was on a slightly negative range. Acquisition derived happiness dimension clearly found to be negatively correlated with life satisfaction, whereas Acquisition centrality and possession defined success found to be neutral or even positively correlated with life satisfaction. In a study conducted on 1129 people in Croatia, researchers attempted to find out what effect materialism has on people and how it affects their well-being and life satisfaction. It was found that the Happiness dimension of materialism, i.e., believing that owning

more things makes one happy, is negatively related to life satisfaction and positive affect. However, the success/centrality dimension was found to be positively linked with happiness and life satisfaction, which means that possessions are an important aspect of life satisfaction. (Lipovčan et al., 2015)

A study on 464 students in Turkey to establish the relationship between materialism, status consumption and life satisfaction also suggests that materialism and life satisfaction are negatively related. Materialists have a possession tendency that will always make them feel dissatisfied. Moreover, the study concludes that there is a strong and significant correlation between materialism and status consumption. (Gungordu et al., 2016)

### Methods:

#### Objectives:

1. To assess the level of materialism among young adults residing in Indore city.
2. To examine the level of life satisfaction among young adults of Indore city.
3. To study the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction among young adults.
4. To determine the role of materialism as a psychological factor influencing life satisfaction among young adults.
5. To contribute empirical evidence regarding the association between material values and subjective well-being in an urban Indian context.

#### Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between materialism and life satisfaction among young adults of Indore city.
2. There is a **significant relationship** between materialism and life satisfaction among young adults of Indore city.
3. Higher levels of materialism are **significantly associated** with life satisfaction among young adults of Indore city.

**Participants:** The sample consisted of young adults (N = 60) from Indore city. Data were collected using standardized scales.

#### Measures:

Material Values Scale (MVS): Richins and Dawson MVS.

Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS): Dr. Ashok Pratap Singh.

**Procedure:** The present study was conducted following a systematic and ethical research procedure. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the concerned academic authorities, and participants were informed about the purpose of the study. The nature of participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. A sample of 60 young adults from Indore city was selected using a convenient sampling method. The inclusion criteria required participants to fall within the young adult age range and to be willing to participate in the study. Individuals who did not complete the questionnaires fully were excluded from the final analysis. Data were collected using two standardized self-report measures: the Material Values Scale (MVS) developed by Richins and Dawson to assess materialism, and the Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) developed by Dr. Ashok Pratap Singh to measure overall life satisfaction. The questionnaires were administered either individually or in small groups, depending on participants' availability. Clear instructions were provided to ensure that participants

understood how to respond to each item, and adequate time was given to complete the scales. After the questionnaires were collected, responses were carefully checked for completeness and accuracy. The data were then coded and entered into statistical software for analysis. Preliminary data screening was carried out to identify missing values and ensure suitability for statistical testing. Pearson’s product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction, while simple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the predictive role of materialism on life satisfaction. The results were interpreted at an appropriate level of statistical significance.

**Results:**

**Objective–1**

To assess the level of materialism among young adults residing in Indore city.

**Table 1  
Descriptive Statistics Showing Level of Materialism among Young Adults**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Materialism (MVS)	60	50.05	9.80	24	73

**Statistical Technique Used**

Descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum and Maximum scores).

**Discussion:**

The results presented in Table 1 describe the level of materialism among young adults residing in Indore city. The mean score obtained on the Material Values Scale (MVS) is **50.05**, with a standard deviation of **9.80**. This indicates that, on average, the participants demonstrate a **moderate level of materialistic orientation**.

The range of scores, extending from **24 to 73**, reflects noticeable variability in materialistic values among the respondents. While some individuals placed relatively low importance on material possessions, others exhibited higher materialistic tendencies. The standard deviation further supports the presence of individual differences in the emphasis given to material acquisition and possessions.

The moderate mean score suggests that young adults in the present sample do not overwhelmingly prioritize material possessions as the central focus of life. Instead, materialism appears to coexist with other life priorities such as education, personal development, and social relationships. This pattern may be influenced by increasing awareness of psychological well-being, exposure to diverse value systems, and changing socio-economic conditions in an urban environment.

Overall, the findings related to Objective–1 indicate that materialism is present among young adults of Indore city, but it exists at a balanced and moderate level rather than at an extreme. This provides a meaningful foundation for further analysis of how materialism interacts with psychological variables such as life satisfaction.

**Objective–2**

To examine the level of life satisfaction among young adults of Indore city.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics Showing Level of Life Satisfaction among Young Adults**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Life Satisfaction (LSS)	60	53.63	11.73	24	77

**Statistical Technique Used**

Descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum and Maximum scores).

**Discussion:**

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics reflecting the level of life satisfaction among young adults residing in Indore city. The mean score on the Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) is **53.63**, with a standard deviation of **11.73**, indicating an overall **moderate level of life satisfaction** among the participants.

The obtained scores ranged from **24 to 77**, suggesting substantial variability in how young adults perceive and evaluate their lives. While some respondents reported lower satisfaction, others demonstrated relatively high satisfaction, reflecting individual differences in life experiences, expectations, and coping resources. The relatively higher standard deviation indicates that perceptions of life satisfaction are not uniform across the sample.

The moderate mean score implies that, on average, young adults are reasonably satisfied with their lives but may still experience certain challenges or unmet aspirations. Factors such as academic pressure, career uncertainty, financial concerns, and social responsibilities commonly faced during young adulthood may influence their overall life satisfaction. At the same time, opportunities for personal growth, education, and social engagement may contribute positively to their life evaluations.

Overall, the findings related to Objective–2 suggest that young adults of Indore city experience a balanced level of life satisfaction. This moderate level provides an appropriate context for examining how psychological variables, such as materialism, may be associated with life satisfaction in subsequent analyses.

**Objective–3**

**To study the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction among young adults.**

Hypothesis–1 (Null Hypothesis)

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is **no significant relationship** between materialism and life satisfaction among young adults of Indore city.

**Table 3**  
**Correlation between Materialism and Life Satisfaction among Young Adults**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value	Significance
Materialism (MVS)	60	50.05	9.80			
Life Satisfaction (LSS)	60	53.63	11.73	<b>0.252</b>	<b>0.052</b>	Not Significant

At the 0.05 level of significance, a relationship is considered significant if  $p \leq 0.05$ .

**Statistical Technique Used**

Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation.

**Discussion:**

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.252$  between materialism and life satisfaction. This indicates a **weak positive relationship** between the two variables. However, the obtained **p-value (0.052)** is slightly higher than the required level of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction is **not statistically significant** at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the observed association may be due to chance rather than a true underlying relationship. Since the obtained **p-value exceeds 0.05**, the null hypothesis is **accepted**. The findings related to

Objective–3 indicate that materialism does not have a statistically significant relationship with life satisfaction among young adults. Although a weak positive correlation was observed, it failed to reach the level of statistical significance, suggesting that materialistic values alone are not strong predictors of how satisfied young adults feel with their lives. This result implies that life satisfaction among young adults may be influenced more strongly by other psychological, social, and emotional factors such as interpersonal relationships, personal achievements, emotional well-being, and future aspirations rather than material possessions. The non-significant association also suggests that possessing or valuing material goods does not necessarily translate into a higher sense of contentment or fulfilment. The present finding aligns with studies that report weak or inconsistent relationships between materialism and subjective well-being, particularly in young populations where multiple developmental and contextual factors simultaneously shape life satisfaction. Thus, the results highlight the complexity of life satisfaction and emphasize that materialism alone may not play a decisive role in determining overall well-being.

**Objective–4**

**To determine the role of materialism as a psychological factor influencing life satisfaction among young adults.**

**Table 4**  
**Regression Analysis Showing the Predictive Role of Materialism on Life Satisfaction**

Predictor Variable	B (Unstandardized)	Std. Error	t-value	R <sup>2</sup>	p-value	Significance
Constant	38.553	—	—			
Materialism (MVS)	0.301	—	—	<b>0.063</b>	<b>0.052</b>	Not Significant

**Discussion:**

The regression analysis indicates that materialism explains **6.3% (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.063)** of the variance in life satisfaction. The regression coefficient (B = 0.301) suggests that for every one-unit increase in materialism, life satisfaction increases by 0.301 units. However, the obtained **p-value (0.052)** is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The results reveal that materialism does not emerge as a statistically significant psychological predictor of life satisfaction among young adults. Although the regression coefficient indicates a positive direction, the effect size is small and fails to reach statistical significance at the 0.05 level. This implies that materialism contributes only marginally to explaining variations in life satisfaction. The low R<sup>2</sup> value suggests that life satisfaction is influenced by multiple factors beyond material values. Psychological aspects such as emotional stability, social relationships, self-esteem, and personal meaning may play a more prominent role in shaping overall life satisfaction during young adulthood. Therefore, while materialism may be one contributing factor, it does not independently exert a strong influence on life satisfaction. These findings indicate that material success alone is insufficient to ensure psychological well-being, highlighting the complex and multidimensional nature of life satisfaction.

**Objective–5**

To contribute empirical evidence regarding the association between material values and subjective well-being in an urban Indian context.

**Table 5**  
Summary of Empirical Findings on Materialism and Life Satisfaction

Variable	Mean	SD	Relationship / Effect	Significance
Materialism (MVS)	50.05	9.80	Weak positive association with life satisfaction	Not Significant
Life Satisfaction (LSS)	53.63	11.73	—	—

**Discussion:**

The present study contributes empirical evidence to the understanding of materialism and subjective well-being within an urban Indian context. The findings indicate that young adults demonstrate moderate levels of both materialism and life satisfaction. However, the association between these two constructs is weak and statistically non-significant. This suggests that in an urban Indian setting, material values do not strongly determine subjective well-being. Young adults may perceive material possessions as necessary for comfort and social functioning, but not as the primary source of happiness or life satisfaction. Cultural values, family support, educational aspirations, and psychological resilience may play a more decisive role in shaping well-being. The study adds to the growing body of Indian research indicating that materialism alone does not guarantee higher life satisfaction. It highlights the importance of considering socio-cultural and psychological factors when examining subjective well-being in rapidly urbanizing societies. Thus, the present research provides meaningful empirical insight into the nuanced relationship between material values and well-being among young adults in India.

**Hypothesis–2**

There is a significant relationship between materialism and life satisfaction among young adults of Indore city.

**Statistical Technique Used**

Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation.

**Table 6**  
Relationship between Materialism and Life Satisfaction among Young Adults

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value	Level of Significance
Materialism (MVS)	60	50.05	9.80			
Life Satisfaction (LSS)	60	53.63	11.73	<b>0.252</b>	<b>0.052</b>	Not Significant

At the **0.05 level of significance**, a relationship is considered significant if  $p \leq 0.05$ .

**Discussion:**

The correlation coefficient between materialism and life satisfaction is  $r = 0.252$ , indicating a **weak positive relationship**. However, the obtained **p-value (0.052)** exceeds the 0.05 level of significance so, hypothesis is rejected. The findings indicate that materialism and life satisfaction are positively related, but the relationship is weak and statistically non-significant. This suggests that an increase in materialistic values does not necessarily lead to a meaningful improvement in life satisfaction among young adults.

The absence of a significant relationship implies that life satisfaction is likely influenced by a broader range of psychological and social factors rather than material values alone. Young adults may value material possessions, but these do not appear to substantially shape their overall evaluation of life quality. The result highlights the complexity of subjective well-being and supports the view that material success alone may not be sufficient for achieving lasting life satisfaction.

**Hypothesis–3**

**Higher levels of materialism are significantly associated with life satisfaction among young adults of Indore city.**

**Statistical Technique Used**

Simple Linear Regression Analysis.

**Table 7**  
**Regression Analysis Showing Association of Materialism with Life Satisfaction**

Predictor Variable	B (Unstandardized)	R <sup>2</sup>	p-value	Level of Significance
Constant	38.553			
Materialism (MVS)	0.301	<b>0.063</b>	<b>0.052</b>	Not Significant

**Discussion:**

The regression coefficient (B = 0.301) indicates that higher materialism is associated with a slight increase in life satisfaction. However, materialism explains only 6.3% of the variance in life satisfaction, and the obtained p-value (0.052) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance so, hypothesis–3 is rejected. The regression results reveal that materialism does not significantly predict life satisfaction among young adults. Although the direction of association is positive, the effect size is small and statistically non-significant. This suggests that higher levels of materialism do not reliably translate into higher life satisfaction. The low explained variance indicates that life satisfaction is shaped by multiple psychological and contextual factors such as emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, personal goals, and coping abilities. Materialism may contribute marginally, but it does not emerge as a strong or independent determinant of subjective well-being. These findings emphasize that material acquisition alone is insufficient to enhance life satisfaction and reinforce the importance of non-material dimensions of well-being, especially during young adulthood.

**Conclusion:**

The present study sought to explore the association between materialism and life satisfaction among young adults in an urban Indian setting. The findings indicate that young adults in Indore city demonstrate moderate levels of materialistic values as well as a moderate degree of life satisfaction. However, the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction was found to be weak and statistically non-significant. This suggests that materialistic orientation, by itself, does not substantially influence how young adults evaluate their overall quality of life. The regression analysis further confirmed that materialism explains only a small proportion of variance in life satisfaction and does not function as a significant psychological predictor. These results highlight that while material possessions may contribute to comfort and social functioning, they do not guarantee sustained satisfaction with life. Young adulthood is a developmental phase characterized by multiple challenges and aspirations, where factors such as

emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, academic or career fulfilment, self-esteem, and future goals may play a more prominent role in shaping life satisfaction. Overall, the findings reinforce the view that life satisfaction is a multidimensional construct influenced by a complex interplay of psychological and socio-cultural factors rather than material values alone. The study adds to existing literature by providing empirical evidence from an urban Indian context and emphasizes the need to promote non-material sources of well-being among young adults. Future research may consider larger samples, diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and additional psychological variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of subjective well-being.

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